

IIP and ARS speakers Mrs. Fatima (Jane) Casewit and Mr. Daoud (Stephen) Casewit visited Mauritania from September 6th - 10th, 2009. Post capitalized on the timing of their visit to refresh recently renewed ties with the Mauritanian government through informal gatherings with local government, religious and civil society leaders. The couple met with the Minister of Islamic Affairs alongside the Ambassador (9/7), visited a well-known local Islamic charity and distributed US government assistance (9/8), met with the directors and went on a tour of the Islamic Institute's Manuscript Conservation Lab and American Corner (9/8), led a roundtable discussion with 30 University students on Islam in America(9/9) and spoke flawless Arabic to a crowd of mostly local Imams at the over 150 person annual Embassy Iftar (9/9). They attended informal Iftar dinners nightly to break the fast with local religious leaders, journalists and civil society leaders. Their pioneering visit - the first of a Moslem American woman and Moslem American couple to Mauritania - was very well received and helped post cement important ties and gain access to local religious and civil society leaders at a critical moment for US - Mauritania relations.

Daoud distributes backpacks during Ramadan 2009 at the local El Awkaf charity provided by the US Embassy Mauritania (below).





Fatima and Daoud are shown ancient Islamic Manuscripts at the Lab at the ISERI Islamic Institute funded by the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation grants in 2002 and 2009 by the research director Ahmed Taleb Salem (far right).



Civil society leaders and journalist at an Iftar dinner at the DCM Dennis Hankins and wife Mira Hankins residence in honor of visiting Muslim in America Scholars Fatima and Daoud Casewit, September 2009.